

CLAIMS:

- 1) A method of facilitating communications using a product item, the product item including an associated interface surface, the interface surface having disposed thereon or therein coded data indicative of an identity of the product item, the method including, in a sensing device:
 - 5 (a) sensing at least some of the coded data;
 - (b) generating, using the sensed coded data, indicating data indicative of the product item identity; and,
 - (c) transferring the indicating data to a computer system, the computer system being responsive to the indicating data to facilitate communications.
- 10 2) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications are performed using a phone.
- 3) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications include at least one of:
 - (a) an SMS message;
 - (b) an MMS message;
 - (c) data transfer; and,
 - 15 (d) voice communications.
- 4) The method of claim 1, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
 - (a) receiving indicating data indicative of a unique identifier; and,
 - (b) facilitating communications using the unique identifier.
- 5) The method of claim 4, wherein the unique identifier is transmitted to the computer system in response to sensing of the coded data by the sensing device, the unique identifier being transmitted by at least one of:
 - 20 (a) a communications device; and,
 - (b) the sensing device.
- 6) The method of claim 1, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
 - 25 (a) generating, using the received indicating data, payment data indicative of a payment; and,
 - (b) arranging payment for the communications using the payment data.
- 7) The method of claim 1, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
 - (a) generating, using the received indicating data, communications data indicative of the communications to be performed; and,
 - 30 (b) providing the communications using the communications data.
- 8) The method of claim 1, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
 - (a) generating, using the indicating data, product item information; and,
 - (b) providing the product item information as part of the communications.
- 9) The method of claim 1, wherein the communications include a capability to send a free message, the method including, in the computer system embedding advertising material within the free message.
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- 10) The method of claim 1, wherein the coded data is indicative of a communications request, and wherein the method includes, generating in the sensing device, indicating data indicative of the communications request.
- 5 11) The method of claim 1, wherein the coded data includes a plurality of coded data portions provided at respective positions on the interface surface, wherein each coded data portion is indicative of the identity of the product item, and wherein the method includes, in the sensing device:
 - (a) sensing at least one coded data portion; and,
 - (b) generating the indicating data using the sensed coded data portion.
- 10 12) The method of claim 11, wherein each coded data portion is indicative of the respective position, and wherein the method includes, generating in the sensing device and using the sensed coded data portion, indicating data indicative of at least one of:
 - (i) a position of the sensed coded data;
 - (ii) a position of the sensing device relative to the interface surface;
 - 15 (iii) an orientation of the sensed coded data; and,
 - (iv) an orientation of the sensing device relative to the interface surface; and,
- 13) The method of claim 12, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
 - (a) receiving the indicating data;
 - (b) generating, using the received indicating data:
 - 20 (i) position data indicative of at least one of:
 - (1) the position of the sensed coded data;
 - (2) the position of the sensing device relative to the interface surface;
 - (3) the orientation of the sensed coded data; and,
 - (4) the orientation of the sensing device relative to the interface surface; and,
 - 25 (ii) identity data indicative of the identity of the product item;
 - (c) determining, using the identity data and the position data, a communications request; and,
 - (d) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 14) The method of claim 12, wherein the method includes, in the sensing device generating, using the sensed coded data, indicating data indicative of movement of the sensing device relative to the coded data portions.
- 30 15) The method of claim 14, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
 - (a) generating, using the received indicating data, movement data indicative of the movement of the sensing device relative to the interface surface;
 - (b) determining, using the movement data, details of the communications required; and,
 - 35 (c) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 16) The method of claim 15, the details including at least one of:

- (a) a message to be sent; and
 - (b) a message destination.
- 17) The method of claim 1, wherein the interface surface includes at least one region, including coded data indicative of an identity of the at least one region, and wherein the method includes,
- 5 in the sensing device:
- (a) sensing the coded data disposed within the at least one region; and,
 - (b) generating, using the sensed coded data, indicating data indicative of the region identity.
- 18) The method of claim 17, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- (a) receiving the indicating data;
 - 10 (b) generating, using the received indicating data, region identity data indicative of the identity of the at least one region;
 - (c) determining, using the region identity data, a communications request; and,
 - (d) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 19) The method of claim 17, wherein the at least one region represents a user interactive element.
- 15 20) The method of claim 1, wherein the method includes, in the sensing device:
- (a) selecting a communications mode; and,
 - (b) generating indicating data indicative of the selected communications mode.
- 21) The method of claim 1, the method including, in the computer system:
- (a) selecting a communications mode;
 - 20 (b) receiving the indicating data;
 - (c) generating, using the received indicating data, identity data indicative of the identity of the product item;
 - (d) determining, using the identity data and the selected communications mode, a communications request; and,
 - 25 (e) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 22) The method of claim 1, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- (a) receiving the indicating data;
 - (b) generating, using the received indicating data, request data indicative of a communications request; and,
 - 30 (c) transferring the request data to a second computer system, the second computer system being responsive to the request data to provide the communications.
- 23) The method of claim 1, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- (a) providing a details request; and,
 - (b) receiving details of the communications required.
- 35 24) The method of claim 23, wherein the details request is provided on a details interface surface, the details interface surface having disposed thereon or therein coded data which includes, at a

plurality of locations on the interface surface, a corresponding plurality of coded data portions, each coded data portion being indicative of an identity of the details interface surface and the position of the coded data portion, the method including, in the sensing device:

- (a) sensing at least some of the coded data portions;
- 5 (b) generating, using the sensed coded data portions, details indicating data indicative of:
 - (i) the identity of the details interface surface; and,
 - (ii) movement of the sensing device relative to the coded data portions;
- (c) transferring the details indicating data to the computer system, the computer system being responsive to the details indicating data to facilitate communications.

10 25) The method of claim 24, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:

- (a) receiving the details indicating data;
- (b) generating, using the received details indicating data:
 - (i) movement data indicative of the movement of the sensing device relative to the interface surface; and,
 - 15 (ii) details identity data indicative of the identity of the details interface surface;
- (c) determining, using the details identity data and the movement data, details data indicative of the details of the communications required; and,
- (d) facilitating communication, using the communications request.

20 26) A method of facilitating communications using a product item, the product item including an associated interface surface, the interface surface having disposed thereon or therein coded data indicative of an identity of the product item, the method including, in a computer system:

- (a) receiving indicating data from a sensing device, the sensing device being responsive to sensing of the coded data to generate indicating data indicative of the identity of the product item;
- 25 (b) generating, using the received indicating data, identity data indicative of the product item identity; and,
- (c) facilitating communications using the product item identity.

27) The method of claim 26, wherein the communications are performed using a phone.

28) The method of claim 26, wherein the communications include at least one of:

- 30 (a) an SMS message;
- (b) an MMS message;
- (c) data transfer; and,
- (d) voice communications.

29) The method of claim 26, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:

- 35 (a) receiving indicating data indicative of a unique identifier; and,
- (b) facilitating communications using the unique identifier.

- 30) The method of claim 29, wherein the unique identifier is transmitted to the computer system in response to sensing of the coded data by the sensing device, the unique identifier being transmitted by at least one of:
- (a) a communications device; and,
 - 5 (b) the sensing device.
- 31) The method of claim 26, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- (a) generating, using the received indicating data, payment data indicative of a payment; and,
 - (b) arranging payment for the communications using the payment data.
- 32) The method of claim 26, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- 10 (a) generating, using the received indicating data, communications data indicative of the communications to be performed; and,
 - (b) providing the communications using the communications data.
- 33) The method of claim 26, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- (a) generating, using the indicating data, product item information; and,
 - 15 (b) providing the product item information as part of the communications.
- 34) The method of claim 26, wherein the communications includes a capability to send a free message, the method including, in the computer system embedding advertising material within the free message.
- 35) The method of claim 26, wherein the coded data includes a plurality of coded data portions provided at respective positions on the interface surface, wherein each coded data portion is indicative of the identity of the product item, and wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- 20 (a) receiving indicating data from a sensing device, the sensing device being responsive to sensing of the coded data to generate indicating data indicative of the identity of the product item and at least one of:
 - 25 (i) the position of the sensed coded data portion; and,
 - (ii) a position of the sensing device relative to the interface surface; and,
 - (b) generating, using the received indicating data:
 - 30 (i) position data indicative of at least one of:
 - (1) the position of the sensed coded data portion on the interface surface; and,
 - (2) the position of the sensing device relative to the interface surface; and,
 - (ii) identity data indicative of the identity of the product item;
 - (c) determining, using the identity data and the position data, a communications request; and,
 - (d) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 35 36) The method of claim 35, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:

- (a) receiving indicating data from the sensing device, the sensing device being responsive to sensing of the coded data to generate indicating data indicative of movement of the sensing device relative to the coded data portions.
 - (b) generating, using the received indicating data, movement data indicative of the movement of the sensing device relative to the interface surface;
 - (c) determining, using the movement data, details of the details communications required; and,
 - (d) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 37) The method of claim 36, the details including at least one of:
- (a) a message to be sent; and
 - (b) a message destination.
- 38) The method of claim 26, wherein the interface surface includes at least one region, including coded data indicative of an identity of the at least one region, and wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- (a) receiving indicating data from the sensing device, the sensing device being responsive to sensing of the coded data to generate indicating data indicative of the identity of the at least one region;
 - (b) generating, using the received indicating data, region identity data indicative of the identity of the at least one region;
 - (c) determining, using the region identity data, a communications request; and,
 - (d) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 39) The method of claim 38, wherein the at least one region represents a user interactive element.
- 40) The method of claim 26, wherein the method includes, in the sensing device:
- (a) selecting a communications mode; and,
 - (b) generating indicating data indicative of the selected communications mode.
- 41) The method of claim 26, the method including, in the computer system:
- (a) selecting a communications mode;
 - (b) receiving the indicating data;
 - (c) generating, using the received indicating data, identity data indicative of the identity of the product item;
 - (d) determining, using the identity data and the selected communications mode, a communications request; and,
 - (e) facilitating communication, using the communications request.
- 42) The method of claim 26, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:
- (a) receiving the indicating data;
 - (b) generating, using the received indicating data, request data indicative of a communications request; and,

(c) transferring the request data to a second computer system, the second computer system being responsive to the request data to provide the communications.

43) The method of claim 26, wherein the method includes, in the computer system:

(a) providing a details request; and,

(b) receiving details of the communications required.

44) The method of claim 43, wherein the details request is provided on a details interface surface, the details interface surface having disposed thereon or therein coded data which includes, at a plurality of locations on the interface surface, a corresponding plurality of coded data portions, each coded data portion being indicative of an identity of the details interface surface and the position of the coded data portion, the method including, in the computer system:

(a) receiving the details indicating data from a sensing device, the sensing device being responsive to sensing of the coded data to generate details indicating data indicative of the identity of the product item and at least one of:

(i) the position of the sensed coded data portion; and,

(ii) a position of the sensing device relative to the interface surface; and,

(b) generating, using the received details indicating data:

(i) movement data indicative of the movement of the sensing device relative to the interface surface; and,

(ii) details identity data indicative of the identity of the details interface surface;

(c) determining, using the details identity data and the movement data, details data indicative of the details of the communications required; and,

(d) facilitating communication, using the communications request.

45) A method of facilitating communications relating to a product item, wherein the method includes providing the product item with an associated interface surface, the interface surface having disposed thereon or therein coded data indicative of an identity of the product item such that when the coded data portion is sensed by a sensing device, the sensing device generates indicating data indicative of the product item identity, the indicating data being transferred to a computer system which is responsive to the indicating data to facilitate communications.

46) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the communications includes:

(a) product servicing;

(b) product communications;

(c) provision of product information; and,

(d) provision of product help services.

47) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data is indicative of an EPC associated with the product item.

- 48) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data distinguishes the product item from every other product item.
- 49) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data is redundantly encoded.
- 50) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data is redundantly encoded
5 using Reed-Solomon encoding.
- 51) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the communications is provided by at least one of:
- (a) the computer system;
 - (b) a second computer system; and,
 - 10 (c) an entity associated with the product item.
- 52) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data is substantially invisible to the unaided eye.
- 53) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data is printed using infrared ink.
- 15 54) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data is provided on the interface surface coincident with visible markings representing at least one of:
- (a) product information;
 - (b) the identity of the product item; and,
 - (c) a communications request.
- 20 55) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the interface surface is at least a portion of at least one of:
- (a) product item packaging;
 - (b) product item labelling;
 - (c) product manuals;
 - 25 (d) product instructions; and,
 - (e) a surface of the product item.
- 56) The method of any one of claims 1, 26 and 45, wherein the coded data is disposed over at least one of:
- (a) substantially all of any one of:
 - 30 (i) an entire product surface;
 - (ii) packaging; and,
 - (iii) a product label;
 - (b) more than 25% of any one of:
 - (i) an entire product surface;
 - 35 (ii) packaging; and,
 - (iii) a product label;

- (c) more than 50% of any one of:
 - (i) an entire product surface;
 - (ii) packaging; and,
 - (iii) a product label;

- 5 (d) more than 75% of any one of:
 - (i) an entire product surface;
 - (ii) packaging; and,
 - (iii) a product label.

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